The Sketch

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AN YOU RECOGNISE THIS OFFICER?

This young officer in the Irish Guards is world famous to-day as GENERAL the HON. SIR HAROLD ALEXANDER, G.C.B., D.S.O., M.C., *Commander-in-Chief, the Allied Central Mediterranean Forces, and Liberator of Rome, the first European capital to be freed from the Nazi oppressors. The photograph, which comes from the Ministry of Information film "Cameramen at War," was taken at Loos in 1915, twenty-nine years ago, when General Alexander (then a young officer) was serving with his regiment in the first world war. Mr. Oliver Lyttelton, Minister of Production, when recently speaking of General Alexander, said that he "had had more fighting experience than any general on either side and . . . was one of the most brilliant soldiers we had ever produced."*

MOTLEY NOTES.

By ALAN KEMP.

Now and Then. We have waited a long time, and now at last the waiting is over. While the first waves of the Grand Assault are being launched one cannot help looking back four years; and the contrast is staggering. We are now bringing against the enemy the greatest force of arms that the world has ever seen. Well, think back for a moment to 1940, after the Fall of France. I had a long conversation the other night with an officer who, from his position on the staff, knew as well as anybody in the country the exact state of our means of defence. There is now no secret about the things he told me. Many of them have already been publicly stated. Others will be coldly recorded, when the time comes, in official histories, and posterity will have difficulty in believing them. The recollection of them makes one gasp, then nervously giggle—then shiver.

"Then, whoosh!—the encircling movement caught them napping and five German divisions were in the bag!"

DRAWN BY STARKE.

Easy Money. The defending troops in the country were (except as to their quality) like a stage army. They were largely imaginary; my friend, and other officers, made it their business to tell everybody inland that the troops were on the coast and everybody on the coast that the troops were inland. The only reinforcements for our handful of men were two Canadian divisions, and my friend observed that we could never be sufficiently grateful to Canada for the moral support which they gave. We had *one* available tank. There were hardly any lorries, and even they, for the most part, were genuine antiques. There were not half enough rifles to go round, and there was small arms ammunition for *two hours'* shooting. The Home Guard, as we all remember, was defying the enemy with pikes and staves. The beach defences were *pour rire*, so were the A.-A. guns and the tank traps. Simultaneously, our army in Flanders seemed almost certainly doomed to complete destruction. My friend summed up by saying that Hitler could probably have taken London with five thousand men, and quite certainly with ten thousand men. And Blücher's words would have come true: "What a city to sack!"

Chin Up! When I asked my friend what averted it all, he said, with the simple piety characteristic of many soldiers: "God." He recounted to me what he called Five Miracles, all of them disasters which were blessings in disguise, and certainly all as remarkable as the Armada tempest. Well, such are the amazing chances and changes of war; to-day Hitler awaits what might have come to us, far more mercilessly, any moment then. We cannot ever sufficiently honour the men who at that time knew, as fortunately most of us did not, the full extent of the danger in which we stood, and who never for a moment lost heart or let others lose heart. That required tremendous character and constancy. There was one man who knew it all better than any other. I need not name him, but I do not think that in our whole history any words or any example have ever been of more value to this nation than the words he uttered then and the example he set. When I hear him criticised—as it is right that all democratic leaders should be criticised—I only want to reply: "Think back to 1940." There have been many other debts since then, but that one is beyond repayment.

Irrepressible Corpse. But what a contradictory nation! The most tense moment of the war—and there are thirty thousand at Lord's to see the Flanneled Fools at the wickets disporting themselves! Can you wonder that Herr Ribbentrop turns to Hitler and says: "Mein Führer, I *told* you these people were hopeless—mad! They can take nothing seriously! There is nothing to fear from such Irresponsibles!" I must remind Bismarck II. that if Waterloo was won at Eton, the Second Front may possibly be won at Lord's. Anyhow, I for one rejoice to see, at this solemn moment, "England *v.* Australia"—all the more because it is England *v.* Australia without body-line complications. I even rejoice to see that it is a One-Day Test instead of a Ten-Day Test—not that I would not willingly witness a Ten-Day Test, to celebrate peace, if I had the chance. I wonder if they discussed the matter at the Dominions Conference? I hope so; it is an important aspect of post-war planning. Ever since I can remember it, cricket has been dead. Well, here it is, dead as ever, with thirty thousand people as mourners. It is perhaps fortunate that all corpses are not equally lively.

"I didn't bring any wrapping-paper because I didn't think you'd have any fis

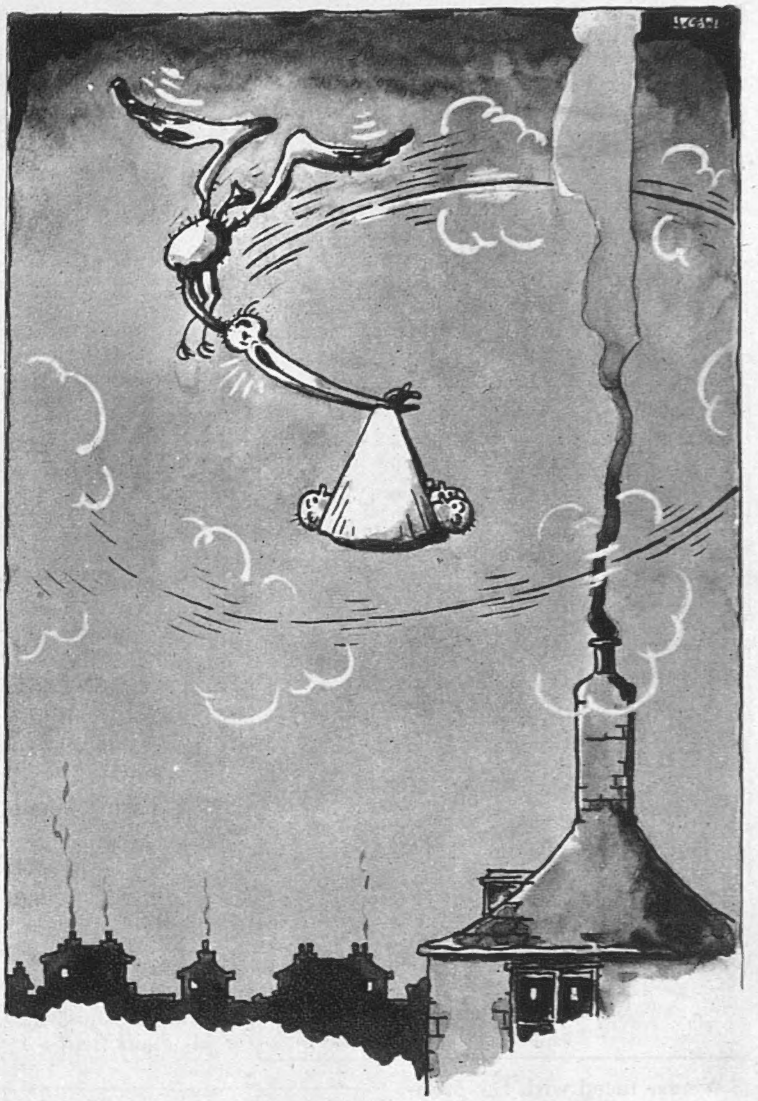
DRAWN BY SILENUS.

SALVAGE ALL YOUR OLD LETTERS—FOR VICTORY

The Global Spirit. Foreigners often think that there is something a trifle insular about our cricket; but there seems to be some chance of its becoming one of our invisible exports when all the world is drawn together in mutual love and understanding. At all events, I was glad to see that the other day a match at Lord's was witnessed by, and explained to, a distinguished member of the Soviet Embassy. As the diplomat had never seen cricket before, and knew no English, the ingenuity of the interpreter must have been taxed to the utmost, but he seems to have played a sound innings and carried his bat honourably. In view of this international success, there is some hope that an Englishman might some day be able to explain cricket to an American, and an American initiate an Englishman into the fine points of baseball. It would need all the resources of diplomacy, but it is wonderful what can be done by good will and the co-operative spirit.

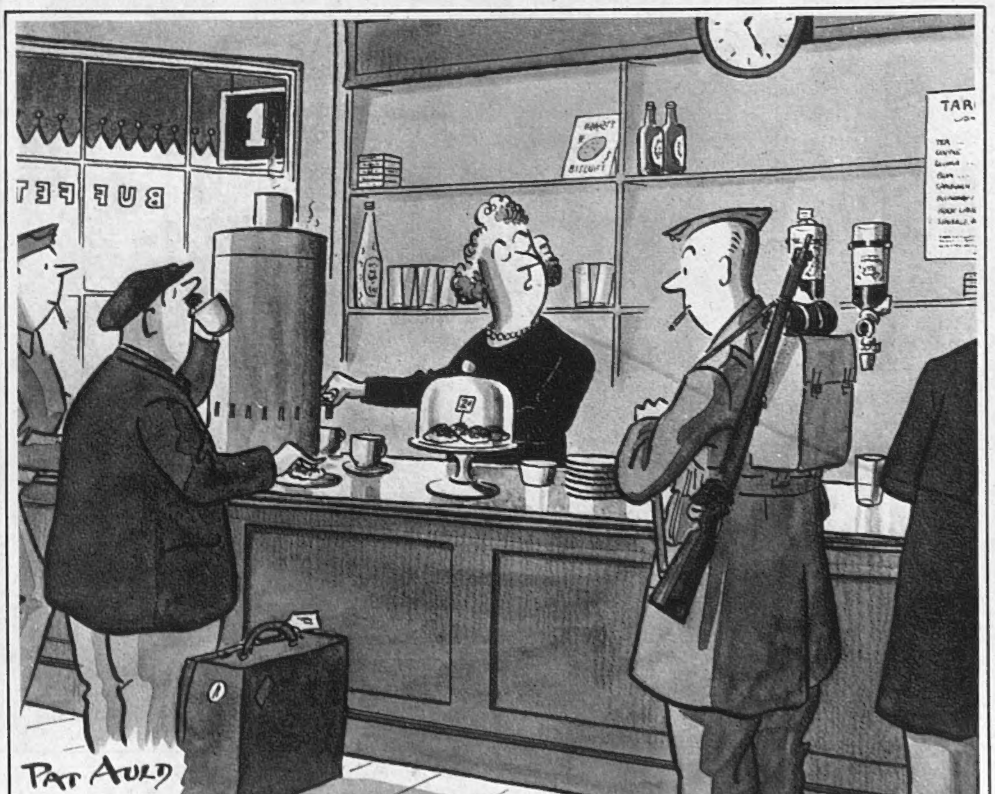
To Chew or to Eschew? One can see the influence of internationalism in many directions. For example, all the forward-looking youth of our country are now chewing gum. Wherever I turn I see the marvellous, multitudinous rhythm of champing jaws. It is no longer confined even to one sex. To the elder generation this will ever remain one of the impenetrable mysteries of nature. But there *must* be some explanation. An entire nation cannot chew for no reason at all. Some human need, some deep, mystic urge, must be behind it. But it is beyond my philosophy, Horatio; I ponder and ponder and cannot guess what possible satisfaction is derived, by any creature but a cow, from perpetual motion of the jaw. Will some psychologist or physiologist please explain? Or had I better send the question on a postcard to the B.B.C.?

Intolerable Suspense. Then there is the belt habit, rapidly communicating itself to our more snappy dressers. In the distressing dearth of suspenders (formerly known as braces), there is much to be said for it; but on no other ground can I commend it—certainly not for either comfort or elegance. And here arises another social mystery, which perplexes my inquiring mind. I trust it may be said, without the displeasure of the censor, that there has recently been some rather warm weather. Off come our coats, and then our waistcoats; and our braces stand revealed. This is highly indecent. A belt, yes—however constricting; but braces, no—however quiet and tasteful. A man nowadays can go round a golf-course with next to nothing on; but if he goes round in his braces, the Committee will be summoned instantly to hound him from decent society. Will anybody please explain what there is about braces (or suspenders) which is peculiarly offensive and caddish?



"... 'S' for Stork calling ... 'S' for Stork calling. ... I'm landing at once ... I'm landing at once!"

DRAWN BY JOHN G. WALTER.



"Certainly they've got currants in——pre-war, *they* are. ..."

DRAWN BY PAT AULD.

A Woman's Honour. Sheer snobbery, I call it—though goodness knows that in the matter of braces there is little class-distinction, especially nowadays, when the highest in the land are glad to get any braces at all. But the masses are undoubtedly rising, and I was very glad to note the proceedings of the Minor and Manipulative Grades Association—in other words, a mass meeting, not to say demonstration, of Whitehall charladies. An overdue protest was entered against the popular conception of the lady-who-comes-to-help-with-the-house-work as a cross between the Widow Twankey and Mrs. Gummidge; she does not exist, it was roundly asserted, in order to provide a perpetual "Gert and Daisy turn." "The stage is more beholding" to the comic charwoman (as Bacon said of love) "than the life of man," and it is high time she asserted her dignity. Simultaneously, certain other vocations ought to hold rallies to protest against their stage caricatures. Notable among them are policemen, butlers, clergymen and colonels.

Service-Above Self. Let it not be supposed that the Minor and Manipulative Grades are the only persons in Whitehall with a sense of human dignity. A White Paper issued by the Committee on the Training of Civil Servants advocates the development of the human touch among those servants who have long been known as civil, but have often

[Continued overleaf.

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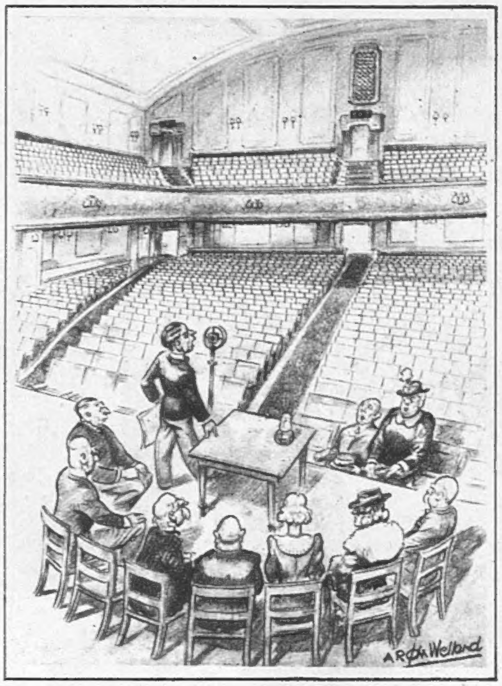
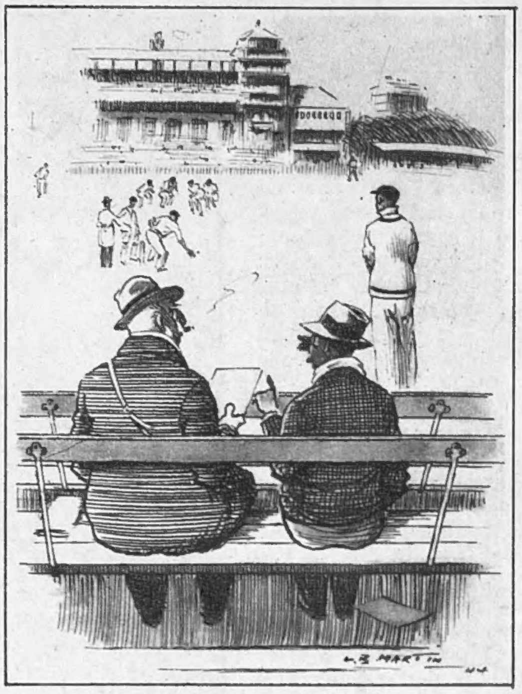
been accused of being the reverse. There is much loose talk of hanging bureaucrats from lamp-posts, with dirty cracks about there not being enough lamp-posts to go round. Read this White Paper, and you will realise that the ideal of every bureaucrat is to "combine prompt and accurate handling of business with a willingness to help the person on the other side of the counter, and, last but not least, an agreeable and cheerful demeanour." A noble ideal, which all should applaud; but when I read of "speed and a proper sense of urgency in correspondence," I find myself at such a rarefied altitude of idealism that I call for oxygen. The proposal for "long leave for study and foreign travel" I heartily support; indeed, in many cases I should go further, and make the leave indefinite.



"We are faced with the problem of overcrowding. . . ."

DRAWN BY WELLAND.



"Aren't you the man I gave a shilling to outside who said he had eleven people to support?"

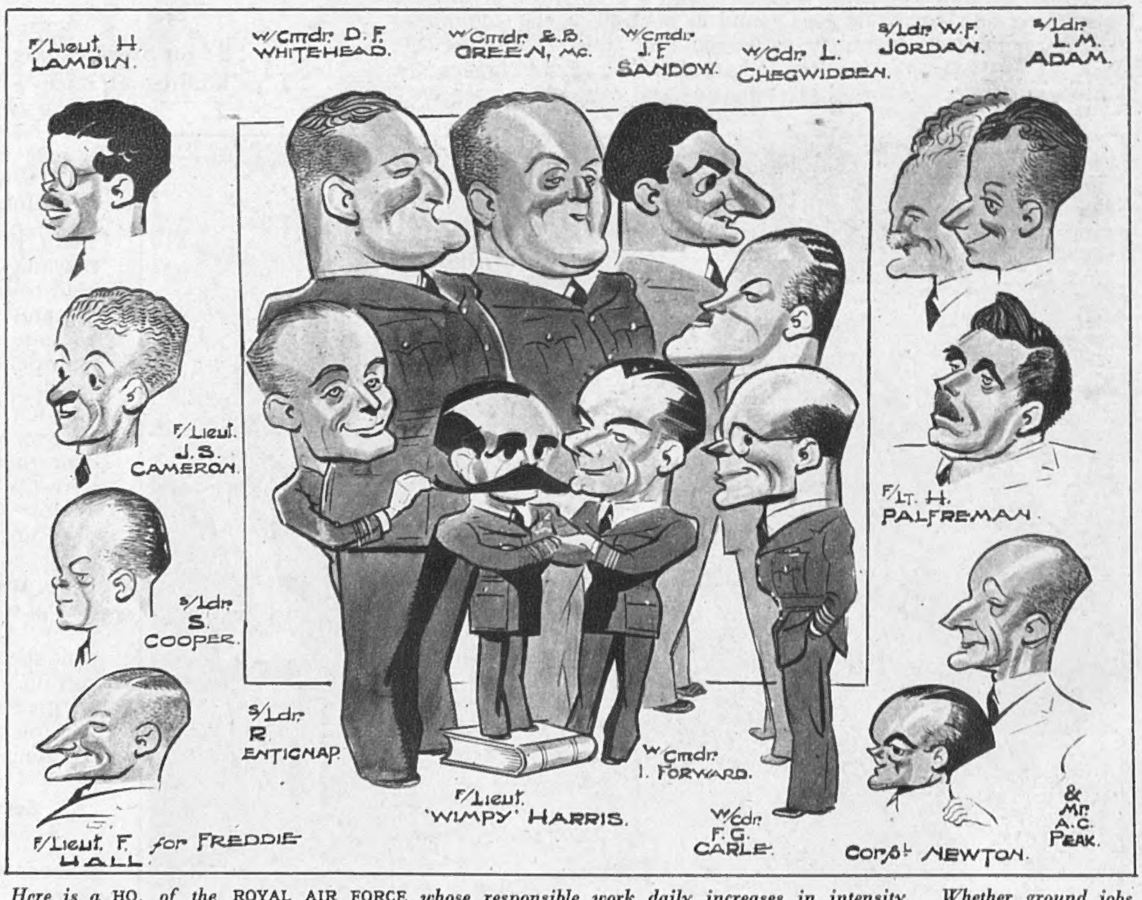
"S'right. Them as is fielding now!"

DRAWN BY L. B. MARTIN.

I Dreamt that I Dwelt. We cannot, however, spare too many Civil Servants after the war, because large numbers will be needed to deal with our applications, in quadruplicate, for steel houses. *So* starkly functional, my dear; and definitely better, I readily agree, than no houses at all. To mollify the functionality (if you will excuse my language), it appears that a form of smelted jasper is to be introduced. This is fascinating; people have dreamt that they dwelt in marble halls, but few, I vow, have dreamt that they dwelt in smelted jasper halls. It isn't plastic, either, but the genuine article (from Wales), reminiscent of the New Jerusalem, where, I seem to remember, jasper and chalcedony figured prominently. Another proof that we are doing what William Blake urged us to do in England's green and pleasant land. If dreams come true, each of these steel-and-jasper desirable residences will have its aeroplane, for the egregious Mr. Henry J. Kaiser is now promising us mass-produced airfields. I wonder what William Blake would have said to *that*? "Dark, Satanic"? No, no, bright and Brave-New-Worldly!

The Eleven-Pound Look. A few Fashion Front Flashes. Women's hats are to be controlled, along with razor-blades and funerals. Go to it, Dr. Dalton! If you can control millinery, you will achieve what thousands of husbands have failed to achieve, after lifelong efforts. If you can bring it off, you will add lustre to our very creditable record in Dress Economy; for the experts calculate that we civilians, in the course of 1944, will not spend more than £11 per head on our wardrobes. Not so bad, when you reckon all the trousseaux and layettes. The total cost of clothing the nation is thus about £450,000,000, and it is a fair indication of the rise in prices that in 1938, when there were no coupons and we did not think twice about buying a new pair of socks, the bill was about the same.

More Trouble! There is no end to the unpleasant by-products of war. In peacetime there were quite enough afflictions with clergyman's sore throat, tennis elbow, miner's nystagmus, painter's colic, and many other peculiar ills that flesh is heir to. Now it appears that the doctors are having a busy time with warden's neck, Home Guard feet and Second Front stomach; they are causing a lot of absenteeism in the factories. Well, at least one industrial disease has disappeared; there is no more housemaid's knee, first, because there aren't any housemaids, and second, because it is the mistresses who are on their knees.



Here is a HQ. of the ROYAL AIR FORCE *whose responsible work daily increases in intensity. Whether ground jobs or flying, the preparations, planning, organisation and "ops" are shared by everyone in R.A.F. blue.*

CARICATURES BY FRED MAY.

The ninety-first of our SERIES OF PLATES IN FULL COLOUR *published in this issue of "The Sketch" is by* DAVID WRIGHT.

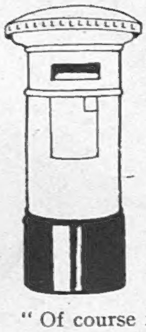
"STREWTH! IT'S MORE LIKE CUTTIN' ROMMEL'S ASPARAGUS!"
"WIRE, IS IT? YOU BE THANKFUL IT AIN'T MINED!"

DRAWN BY FRANK REYNOLDS.

B

Please forward

By JOYCE DENNYS.



MY DEAR ROBERT—A most extraordinary thing has happened here. A pair of seagulls have built their nest on Mrs. Savernack's roof just below this house. Early in the Spring they took possession of the lead roof on top of the Savernacks' bathroom window, and after a time Mrs. Seagull took to walking up and down with a large twig in her mouth and a helpless expression on her face. "That bird isn't right in her head," I said to Charles one day. "She 'll never make a good mother."

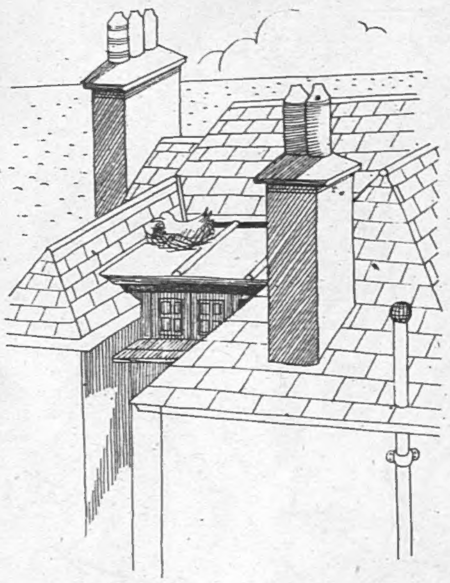
Charles joined me at the window. Mrs. Seagull walked in her careful, flat-footed way across the roof and laid the twig carefully in the corner. "You don't think she could be going to make a nest, do you?" I said.

"Of course not," said Charles. "Seagulls never nest on roofs. The poor thing 's mad. I 'm sorry for her husband."

The next morning there was quite a little pile of twigs in the corner, and the morning after it was quite large, and Mrs. Seagull was sitting on the top of it, looking as self-satisfied as the seagull Edith Evans had in her hat when she acted in "The Importance of Being Ernest."

"Look, Charles!" I cried. "She 's sitting!"

"Who?" said Charles, from his dressing-room.



"Mrs. Seagull was sitting on the top of it."

"The Seagull."

"Well, I 'm damned!" said Charles, hurrying to the window as he buttoned his braces.

"Don't tell Mrs. Savernack, Charles; she might want to have it removed."

"Don't tell *anybody*," said Charles. "The whole thing is most interesting and unusual. If I were the sort of man who writes to *The Times*, I would write about this."

A few days afterwards Mrs. Savernack came to the house, collecting for the penny-a-week Red Cross Fund. "I 'll come up," she shouted from the hall. "Are you in your bedroom?"

"No, no, Mrs. Savernack!" I cried, for it is from my bedroom window that the Seagull's nest can be most clearly seen. "I 'll come down," and I rushed out of the door and slap into Mrs. Savernack, knocking the collecting-box out of her hand.

"Don't be so wild, Henrietta," she said crossly. "What 's the matter with you?"

"I just wanted to save you coming upstairs."

"Why? Haven't you made the beds yet?" said Mrs. Savernack, and a gleam came into her eye, for it was then three o'clock in the afternoon.

"Of course I 've made the beds," I said, but Mrs. Savernack pushed past me into the room. I ran past her and over to the window, and quickly drew the curtains. "How do you like my black-out?" I said brightly.

"The same as I did four years ago, when you put it up," said Mrs. Savernack, and she drew the curtains back and looked out. "Nice view," she said shortly, and turned away from the window.

I was so pleased I could have kissed her, and I put my arm round her waist as we went downstairs. "What 's the *matter* with you, Henrietta?" she said in bewilderment; "and why do you look at me so strangely?"

The next day I met Mrs. Admiral outside the fish-shop, and she drew me aside. "If I tell you a great, great secret, will you promise not to tell anybody?" she whispered. "There 's a seagull nesting on the Savernacks' roof."

"I know."

Mrs. Admiral looked disappointed. "I 've watched it from the first twig," she said proudly.

"I watched them courting."

Mrs. Admiral looked down her nose. "I wouldn't care to do that," she said. "You won't tell the Savernacks, will you?"

"Of course not!"

"My husband says that if we get heavy rain he 's afraid the nest will be swept away."

"My husband says that if we get a heat-wave he 's afraid the eggs will cook."

"We must hope for the best," sighed Mrs. Admiral.

In the Grocer's I felt a hand on my arm. It was Mrs. Whinebite. "I want a word with you in Private," she said, and drew me behind the bacon counter. "When I was having tea at the Admiral's yesterday," she said in a low voice, "I happened to glance out of the window, and there, on the Savernacks' roof, I saw——"

"A seagull sitting on her nest."

"Oh, so you have noticed it?"

"Yes."

"I said nothing about it to the Admiral, of course. You know what these ornithologists are, but I go and look at her every day, the sweet darling, and take her a little fish. If I go to the bottom of your garden I can just throw it up on to the roof of the Savernacks' bathroom. You don't mind, do you?"

"Well, if you could just manage not to walk on the peas——"

"My darling, darling seagull! Vernon says I 'm quite silly about her."

When next Mrs. Savernack called for the Penny-a-Week I took care to be polishing the floor in the hall. Mrs. Savernack sat down on the hall chair and said: "A most extraordinary thing happened yesterday. When I went to wash my hands in the bathroom, what do you think was in the bath?"

"Mr. Savernack?"

"Don't be silly, Henrietta. A fish's head."

"How odd."

"Wasn't it? As a matter of fact, I was very glad of it," said Mrs. Savernack. Then she looked at me keenly and said: "If I tell you a great, great secret, will you promise not to tell anybody? There 's a seagull nesting on our roof."

"No!"

"There is. As a matter of fact, you can see it quite plainly from your bedroom window, but of course you wouldn't notice a thing like that. Don't tell the Admiral, will you?"

I promised I wouldn't.

So there Mrs. Seagull sits, watched over with loving care by all the neighbours. She gets a little anxious sometimes when Mr. Seagull is away too long, but on the whole he is pretty good and hangs about the chimney-pots most of the time. Occasionally he takes a turn at sitting on the nest, and a fine fuss he makes. When I am fire-watching and clamping my knees together to keep them from trembling, I think of Mrs. Seagull, so brave and quiet, sitting on her nest, and I feel ashamed. Once or twice, when the Bangs have been louder than usual, there has been a faint twittering from the roof below. I hope Mr. Seagull stays near her at night.

Always your affectionate Childhood's Friend,

HENRIETTA.

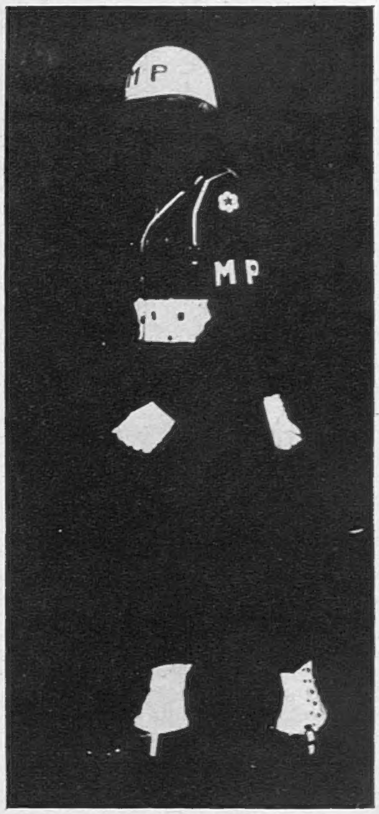
"Slap into Mrs. Savernack."

"There, on the Savernacks' roof, I saw. . ."

WE TAKE OFF OUR HAT TO—

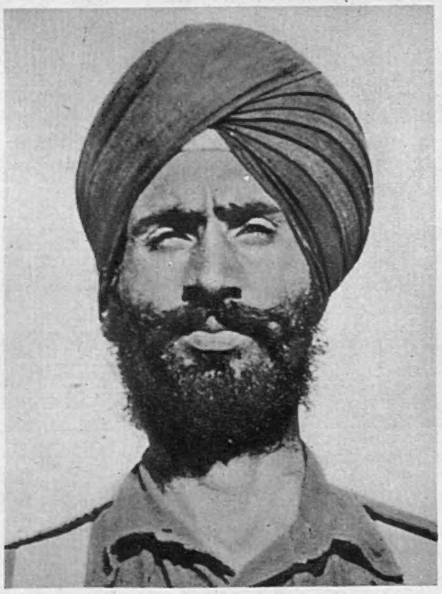
THESE N.F.S. MEN—*for letting the daring young D.R. on a flying motor-bike make a doormat of them.*

AT their Sports Meeting at Walthamstow, prowess and skill of all sorts was displayed by the level-headed and courageous members of the National Fire Service. The D.R. shown in the picture is not more sure of clearing the obstacle than are the men lying down that he will give them a miss.



THIS YANKEE MILITARY POLICEMAN—*for being the perfect eye-full of "You Have Been Warned."*

THE lily-white tin-hats, belts, spats and gloves of the U.S. Military Police cause nobody in London to take a second glance nowadays. They are part of the scenery. But our photograph shows a not-so-usual black-out aspect of one of these gentlemen—a proper warning without words to the truant.



ACTING NAIK NAND SINGH—*for the magnificent heroism and disregard for danger which won him the V.C.*

MR. ANTHONY SMITH—*for winning the G.C. by a deed of coolest courage and sustained bravery.*

NAIK NAND SINGH, 11th Sikhs, won his V.C. in Burma. A heavily armed Japanese platoon crept into a position covering the main Maungdaw-Buthidaung road, digging fox-holes and trenches on the hillside. Nand Singh, commanding platoon leading section, led his men up a very steep ridge under heavy fire. Though wounded in thigh, face and shoulder, he took the first trench with the bayonet by himself, and the second trench at the point of the bayonet. Then, with his section all casualties, he captured a third trench, killing the occupants. The remainder of the platoon then seized the hilltop and dealt with the enemy.

THE "London Gazette" for May 31 gave the name of a chimney-sweep, MR. ANTHONY SMITH, of the Chelsea Civil Defence Service, who has been awarded the George Cross. During a comparatively recent raid on London bombs hit a road, fracturing gas and water mains. Five four-storey houses pancaked under the blast; wreckage caught fire and cries for help were heard. Smith burrowed his way under the wreckage and appeared to be cut off by fire, and there was little chance that he would get out alive. Three-quarters of an hour later a face appeared at a hole in the area wall. It was the man Smith had rescued, with Smith behind him. Smith had partly led, partly pushed the casualty for 12 yards with a furnace just over his head and fire dripping down through crannies in the débris. Getting his breath again, Smith went down into another house and worked waist-deep in water in a basement, chopping and sawing beams to free a woman trapped there.

GUY BYAM—*for being a B.B.C. invasion War Commentator who took the jump with the paratroops.*

HOWARD MARSHALL—*for finding his invasion assignment cost him a couple of duckings from a brace of barges.*

GUY BYAM, B.B.C. War Correspondent, trained with the paratroops for the invasion, and went over with them to Normandy in a glider, taking the jump as they did. He broadcast a thrilling account of his experiences, giving many vivid details, even to the small personal belongings carried by the paratroops—one being a newspaper which the owner intended to read on arrival!

HOWARD MARSHALL, journalist and broadcaster, was the B.B.C. commentator who went over to France in a landing barge with the invading soldiers. This experience cost him two duckings, for the landing barge in which he went over struck a mine on arrival at the beaches, and in five feet of water he and the other men had to scramble ashore. The barge he boarded for home was hit too, and he got another ducking, and in the end gave his broadcast with the battle-dress still saturated with sea-water and clinging to him.

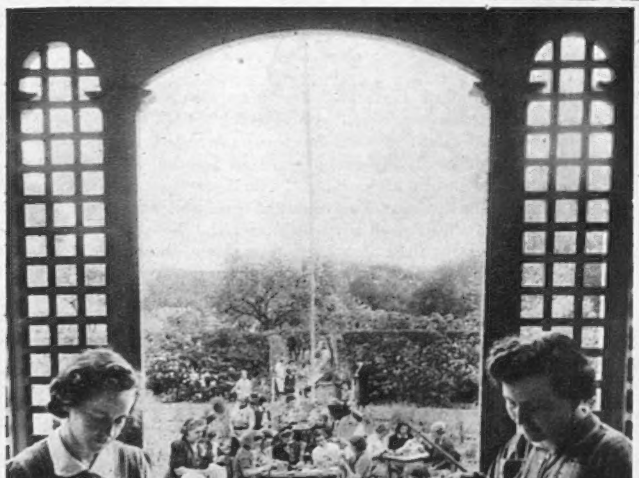
WEDDINGS, WORK, AND ART:

The MARCHIONESS OF QUEENSBERRY *(Cathleen Mann, the artist) looking at a gouache by Keith Vaughan, soldier-artist whose first one-man show was held at the new Lefevre Galleries, 131-134, New Bond Street.*

MISS ELIZABETH THOMAS, *daughter of Mr. Rowland Thomas, K.C., married* CAPTAIN D. RICHMOND-JONES, *the Gordon Highlanders, in the Round Chapel of the bombed Temple Church. The Master of the Temple (Canon Temple) officiated.*

Right: Invasion Day in Coastal Command Operations room: AIR CHIEF-MARSHAL SIR SHOLTO DOUGLAS, K.C.B., M.C., D.F.C., *A.O.C.-in-C., Coastal Command, is directing the air protection of the Invasion Fleets. Behind are* AIR VICE-MARSHAL ELLWOOD, C.B., D.S.C., *Senior Air Staff Officer;* CAPTAIN PEYTON-WARD, R.N., *Senior Naval Liaison Officer; and* LIEUT. SOBIESKI, *U.S. Navy Liaison Officer (l. to r.).*

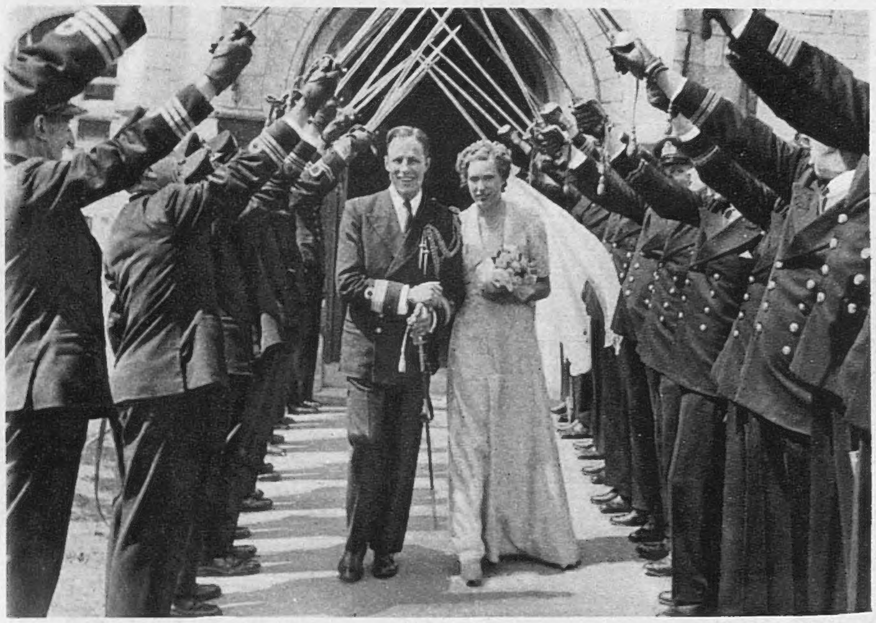
Getting a hair-do on the Anzio beach-head is hardly a de luxe affair for British nurses in Italy. See how SISTER PAT WATSON *is shampooed by* MARY GRANT, *of Co. Tyrone, in a portable rubber basin.*



This idyllic-looking scene in a London suburban garden shows women war workers hard at it getting on with their tasks of MAKING SMALL FITTINGS FOR R.A.F. RUBBER DINGHIES*—an Air Ministry priority job.*

Millions of CONTINENTAL HOLIDAY SNAPSHOTS, *taken by British tourists in pre-war days, are helping our invasion forces. They were received in answer to an appeal, and are being sorted, copied and filed in a huge Admiralty library by Wrens.*

PICTORIAL NEWS PARADE.



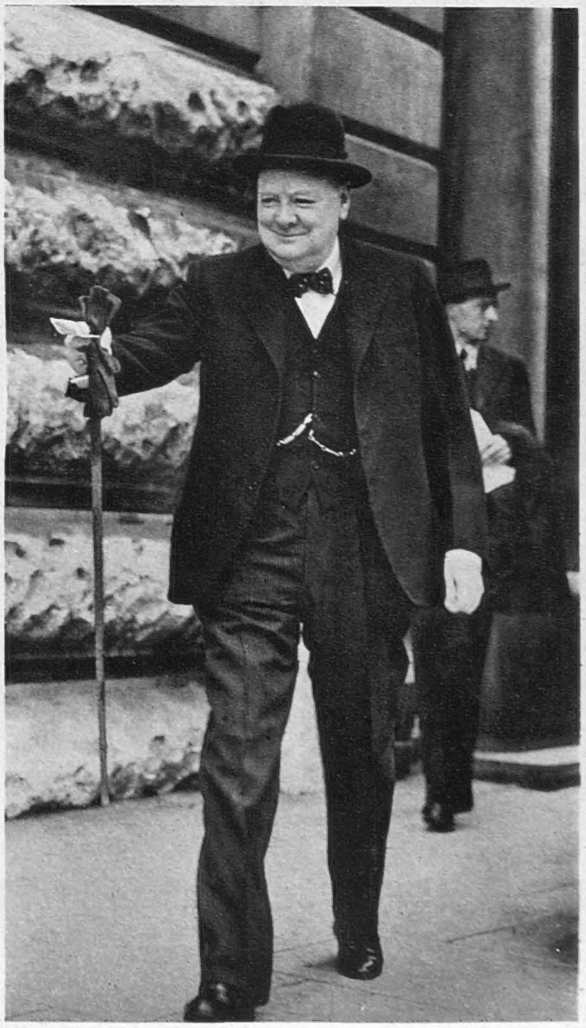
SECOND OFFICER K. N. HARPER, *W.R.N.S., Asst. Secretary to the Commodore of the R.N. Barracks, Devonport, married* PAYMASTER LT.-COMMANDER J. E. STEVENS, R.N., *Secretary to the Commodore, at St. Nicholas Church, R.N. Barracks, Devonport.*

Film actress PAULETTE GODDARD *married* CAPTAIN BURGESS MEREDITH, U.S.A.A.F., *the former film and stage actor. The ceremony took place at the home of David O. Selznick, in Hollywood.*

Left: MAJ. RICHARD GIROUARD, *Welsh Guards, son of the late Maj.-Gen. Sir Percy Girouard, married* MISS BEATRICE GROSVENOR, *daughter of S/Ldr. the late Lord Edward Grosvenor, at St. James's, Spanish Place.*

Right: MISS CYNTHIA ELLIOT *is to marry the Rt. Hon. Leslie Hore-Belisha. Daughter of Mrs. Gilbert Elliot, she was recently repatriated from Germany, where she nursed British prisoners of war.*

AIR CHIEF-MARSHAL SIR T. LEIGH-MALLORY, *Invasion Air Chief, presented the C.B.E. to* COL. ELLIOTT ROOSEVELT, *the President's second son. Col. Roosevelt's unit, the Combined Photographic Reconnaissance Wing, played a vital part in the Italian campaign.*



This is the PREMIER'S INVASION SMILE *as he left Downing Street for Parliament to tell the world the Second Front had started and was going according to plan—and what a plan!*

LADY LEIGH - MALLORY *is the wife of Air Chief - Marshal Sir Trafford Leigh-Mallory, K.C.B., D.S.O., R.A.F., the Allied Air Commander-in-Chief, under General Eisenhower, for the Invasion of Europe, the most important military operation in our history, which began on Monday, June 5. She is the second daughter of the late Mr. Edmund Stratton Sawyer, was married in 1915, and has a son and a daughter. The marriage of the latter to Flight Officer W. E. (Tony) Doherty, U.S.A.A.F., took place recently at Stanmore. Our photographs of Lady Leigh-Mallory were taken at her country home.* [PHOTOGRAPHS BY WILLIAM DAVIS.]

WIFE OF OUR INVASION AIR COMMANDER.

ADM. SIR BERTRAM HOME RAMSAY'S experience of Combined Operations is second to none. He bore the chief burden of the arrangements by sea for the withdrawal from Dunkirk; planned the sea side of the Allied landing in North Africa in 1942; and also of the landing in Sicily, and was in command of the last-named operation. There is no aspect of the problem of sea-borne expeditions with which he is unacquainted. Lady Ramsay is the only daughter of the late Colonel C. T. Menzies, was married in 1929, and has two sons.

PHOTOGRAPHS BY WILLIAM DAVIS.

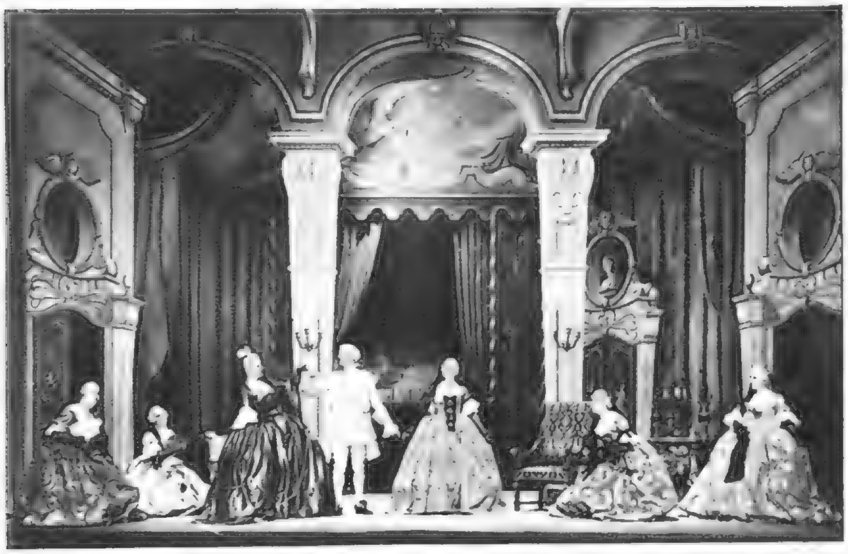
ADMIRAL SIR BERTRAM RAMSAY, K.C.B., K.B.E., M.V.O., R.N., *Allied Naval Commander-in-Chief, under General Eisenhower, for the Invasion of Europe, watches the Fleet sail to the assault.*

LADY RAMSAY, *wife of Admiral Sir Bertram Ramsay, K.C.B., R.N.*

OUR NAVAL INVASION CHIEF; AND HIS WIFE.

Pappacoda (JERRY VERNO) does a brisk trade selling macaroni outside the Senator's house, in Venice.

The mob, masked like Domenico Tiepolo revellers, enjoy carnival time in the Duke's palace.



The elderly wives of the chief Senators get a great thrill out of their presentation to the wicked Duke (HENRY WENDON).

The Duke (HENRY WENDON) makes love to Annina (DARIA BAYAN) under the impression that she is the beautiful wife of the Senator.

VENETIAN CARNIVAL IN VIENNESE WALTZ-TIME.

"A NIGHT IN VENICE," at the Cambridge Theatre, has a *décor* with gondolas, a ballet of the personages of the *Commedia dell'Arte*, and masked revellers whose costumes are after the carnival drawings of Domenico Tiepolo; but the Johann Strauss waltz tunes and lilting melodies are of the genuine Viennese brand. The opera was written in 1884, so has had to wait a long time before coming to London, but is none the less welcome for that.

Pappacoda, disguised as a Senator (right), and the Barber (DENNIS NOBLE) are furious at finding Annina and the Maid (HEATHER BAYS) in the Ducal Palace on Carnival Night.

VICEREGAL AFFAIRS.

Here is the Viceroy's desk at his house in New Delhi. A portrait of Lady Wavell is in the centre, and left, a caricature of an officer out pig-sticking, with a tiger for quarry.

A picnic party at a ruined fort at Tuglakabad includes LADY WAVELL, MRS. DE BATHE (her secretary and lady-in-waiting), the Comptroller, MAJOR COATES, the HON. FELICITY WAVELL, and several A.D.C.s.

The Viceroy's eldest daughter, the HON. MRS. FRANCIS HUMPHRYS, is wearing an Indian sari given to her as a wedding present when she married her father's Military Secretary, Colonel Francis Humphrys.

CAPTAIN LORD EUSTON, A.D.C. to the Viceroy, helps MRS. HUMPHRYS with her Red Cross work.

THESE photographs are from a series taken at and near the Viceroy's House, New Delhi. Lord and Lady Wavell are lucky in having with them two of their daughters, the Hon. Mrs. Francis Humphrys and the Hon. Felicity Wavell. Since he became Viceroy, Lord Wavell has made many flying visits to different parts of India where his presence was urgently needed. He likes informality, and is a very hard worker.

PHOTOGRAPHS BY CECIL BEATON.

Tableau—by National Fire Service instructors.

Grand Finale: the complete team of N.F.S. instructors.

FIRE-FIGHTING FIT.

Network practice: one of the exercises for girl instructors of the N.F.S.

Tough work! A team of N.F.S. girls di

N.B. A Coloured plate is inserted in this issue.

Limbering up: N.F.S. girls prepare for more strenuous exercise.

Perfect timing and balance: N.F.S. qualified instructors.

...ing their training as P.T. instructors.

Leapfrog in the hard way is easy for an N.F.S. girl P.T. instructor.

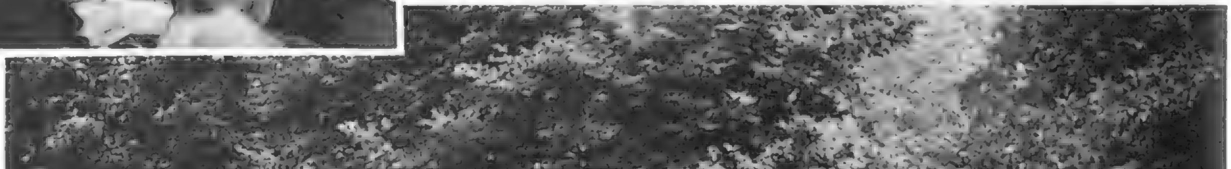
THE girls of the National Fire Service must be kept fire-fighting fit, for when they go into action their strenuous duties call for stamina and perfect physical condition. All N.F.S. stations are provided with suitable physical training classes, with instructors who have been taught by experts. They go through a course and after passing out, they are sent round to the various depôts to take classes and teach other instructors. Our photographs show one of the best teams of girl instructors during their final training; and may be taken as illustrating typical N.F.S. P.T.

FIFTH WAR-TIME FOURTH AT ETON.

The School v. Eton Ramblers: the cricket match in progress on Agar's Plough.

Spectators lined up on the river bank to see the Procession of Boats go by.

Shorn of their decorative attire, but smart and impressive: the Procession of Boats at Fellows Eyot.



After the Procession of Boats: the Wet-Bobs singing and swinging along on shore to the strains of "The Eton Boating Song."

THE programme of the fifth wartime FOURTH OF JUNE at Eton, held on Saturday, June 3, was not arranged in the normal, traditional, peace-time order, for the Procession of Boats was held at 2.45 p.m. instead of coming in the evening, when many people had left. The oarsmen, of course, were shorn of their usual smart clothes, but the procession was decorative and impressive. The crews of the "Monarch," the "Victory" and the "Prince of Wales" stood up, and those of the Lower Boats tossed their oars with an admirable steadiness. The speeches in the Music Room began at 11, an hour earlier than usual, and were, on the whole, a thoroughly good and entertaining lot. The cricket was capital, too. The celebrations were on a much smaller scale than in pre-war years, and there were no special trains, but parents and relatives managed to get there in considerable force.

THE NEW "MRS. CHEYNEY"— CORAL BROWNE.

CORAL BROWNE is to play the name-part, first played by Gladys Cooper, in the revival of Frederick Lonsdale's "The Last of Mrs. Cheyney" at the Savoy on June 15. This comedy of "the day before yesterday" belongs to the 1900-1910 period, and has the charm of Edwardian costumes, which are designed by Sophia Harris. Miss Browne's great personal success in "The Man Who Stayed to Dinner" brought her before the public, and she recently played Ruth Sherwood in "My Sister Eileen," which had a long run. Jack Buchanan will be the Lord Arthur Dilling, and Athene Seyler Lady Frinton.

PHOTOGRAPH BY ANTHONY.

CINEMA CAMEOS.

By C. A. LEJEUNE.

THE cinema has lately become so public in its studies—its drama a clash of national ideologies, its heroes speaking in the democratic plural—that it is quite a relief to come across a film that deals with a purely private business. "LADY IN THE DARK" (Plaza) is, in fact, more than private. It is confidential. It is concerned with the things a patient whispers to her psychoanalyst. The film, with Ginger Rogers in the part created by Gertie Lawrence in the New York stage version, has been described by one American reviewer as "the Id in Technicolor." It makes statements that will startle the fur tippet off your Aunt Annie. It will send many a suggestible customer home in a flurry to probe into her subconscious.

Liza Elliott, the lady in the dark, is the editor of a glossy fashion magazine named *Allure*. She is the career woman *de luxe*, the absolute arbiter of her little world of chromium and glass and highly-trained, fashion-conscious artists. She wears tailored suits that are said to be severe, but she wears a new one every day, and they are impeccably cut. There 's one in a cinnamon shade, that she tops with a mink coat lined with cinnamon, and another in olive green that—excuse me, that 's the worst of "Lady in the Dark." It will set every woman rambling off on the topic of costumes.

Anyway, the point is that Liza's heart is in her work, and she has no time for men, not even for the kind, elderly publisher (Warner Baxter), who has been keeping her in platonic luxury for ten years, and is only waiting for his divorce to marry her. But something is amiss with Liza. Her nerves are all on edge. She snaps at her colleagues. She can't decide what sort of cover to use for the Easter number of *Allure*. She hurls a paper-weight at her advertising manager (Ray Milland)—though you may not altogether blame her for that, since he is the sort of egregiously cute young man who calls her "Boss-lady," and enters the office saying brightly, "Do you want a gooey kiss?" She is also haunted by a snatch of tune. When she begins to hear it rendered by heavenly Wurlitzers and celestial choirs, that fixes her. She hurries off to a psychoanalyst. There, on his chaste, pastel-coloured couch, she relates her life-story and describes her dreams. We get the full benefit of both, and the dreams are a whiz. There are three of them, in rainbow shades and candy colours, and swirling mists of Technicolor. The Blue Dream. The Wedding Dream. The Circus Dream. Paramount hastens to tell us that Miss Rogers' costumes for the three dreams, including one with several hundred head of mink, amount to something like five thousand pounds.

The psychoanalyst, being a medical man and unmoved by costume inventories, listens to Liza's dreams and reminiscences in an impartial spirit, and gets down to the truth of her case in a jiffy. She has been frustrated by her parents in childhood and inhibited by her schoolmates in adolescence. The haunting tune is the subconscious memory of a nursery song she was never allowed to finish. Her affection for the elderly publisher is a transference of love for her father. Her "severe suits" are the outward symbols of her inferiority complex as a woman. The best thing for Liza to do, he says, is to marry a man who is capable of dominating her.

Obviously the publisher won't do, on account of that Œdipus complex. For a time Liza cherishes the idea of marrying a beautiful film-star from Hollywood (Jon Hall), whose torso and profile have set the office of *Allure* in a flutter. But, fortunately, she learns just in time that he 's a psychological case too, and is looking for a wife with the qualities of a mother. So there 's nothing left for Liza but the advertising manager.

In the past, films with a psychological quirk have not been particularly popular with the customers, but a girl who wears as many minks as Miss Rogers can afford to indulge in half-a-dozen complexes. The colour work is as good as any I remember on the screen, and the piece has that fantastic, exaggerated quality that is beneficial to Technicolor. The mass psychology boys have used their heads on this one, only slipping up, I think, in one instance. That song, that unfinished song—"My ship has sails of silk"—ta ta-da, tee te-dee—how *does* it go on? They really should have given us the tune, at last, in its triumphant entirety.

A friend of mine, who has lived in Clapham all his life, came out of Noel Coward's film about a Clapham family, "THIS HAPPY BREED," in a kind of rage. "It 's an insult to Clapham," he said. "Sheer snobbery on Coward's part. He ought to have known we weren't that type in Clapham—talking with that Cockney accent—living that way. After all, he once lived near Clapham himself." "You mean," I asked him, "it couldn't have happened in Clapham?" "It couldn't have happened," he said with local pride, "*that* side of Clapham."

Coming from the north myself, I wouldn't know the niceties of South London suburban life, but I am more than ever convinced, from my friend's reaction, that there is something in the Coward piece that cuts very near the bone. The Gibbonses of 17, Acacia Road, may have been drawn with that slight touch of exaggeration that is the artist's privilege, but they are true characters nevertheless.

"This Happy Breed" (Gaumont and Marble Arch Pavilion) is a film version of the play, and in my own opinion—and, I may say, in that of my friend from Clapham—it is very much better than the play. On the stage, this chronicle of a suburban family between two wars was confined to a single set. On the screen, the camera has been given a roving commission. Not only does it wander at will through all the rooms and "usual offices" (a scene in the all-in bathroom makes cinema history) of 17, Acacia Road, but it is free to record the doings of the family on their days out. It follows them to the Wembley Exhibition, to dance-halls, to the Cenotaph, to the first talkies, to King George's Lying-in-State; glimpses of the national pageant outside provide a steady background for the small drama at home. The camera is inquisitive, and no detail of changing taste or fashion has been allowed to escape its quiet Technicolor record.

The Gibbonses take up residence in 17, Acacia Road towards the end of the last war, hanging their pictures, putting up their cheap furniture, over the faded marks on the wallpaper left by the household

THE BEST PLAYS.

*Starred by "The Sketch." ***=highest value.*

*** "BLITHE SPIRIT" (*Duchess*). Noel Coward's play. Betty Ann Davies, Cecil Parker, Irene Browne, Beryl Measor.

*** "PINK STRING AND SEALING WAX" (*Duke of York's*). 1880 Brighton comedy. Iris Hoey, Dorothy Hyson, David Horne.

*** "UNCLE HARRY" (*Garrick*). Victorian gas-light murder thriller, with Michael Redgrave and Beatrix Lehmann.

** "THE DANCING YEARS" (*Adelphi*). Ivor Novello's romantic musical play, with Muriel Barron and Roma Beaumont.

** "SOMETHING IN THE AIR" (*Palace*). Musical, with Jack Hulbert, Cicely Courtneidge.

** "PANAMA HATTIE" (*Piccadilly*). Musical comedy, with Bébé Daniels, Richard Hearne, Max Wall, Ivan Brandt, Claude Hulbert.

** "ARSENIC AND OLD LACE" (*Strand*). Witty, murderous farce. Lilian Braithwaite, Mary Jerrold, Naunton Wayne, Frank Pettingell, Edmund Willard.

** "WHILE THE SUN SHINES" (*Globe*). Rattigan's inter-allied complications without tears. Jane Baxter, Ronald Squire, Hugh McDermott.

** "SWEETER AND LOWER" (*Ambassadors*). Second edition of "Sweet and Low" revue: Hermione Gingold and Henry Kendall.

** "THERE SHALL BE NO NIGHT" (*Aldwych*). Wonderful acting by the Lunts in Robert Sherwood play.

** "THE LISBON STORY" (*Hippodrome*). Play with music.

* "QUIET WEEK END" (*Wyndham's*). Sequel to "Quiet Wedding."

* "THE LILAC DOMINO" (*His Majesty's*). Revived, with Pat Taylor, Leo Franklyn, Bernard Clifton, Elizabeth French.

* "A SOLDIER FOR CHRISTMAS" (*Vaudeville*). Light comedy: Joyce Barbour, Robert Beatty.

* "JILL DARLING" (*Winter Garden*). Musical comedy revived: Arthur Riscoe, Carole Lynne.

* "THE DRUID'S REST" (*St. Martin's Theatre*). Emlyn Williams's light comedy, with Gladys Henson, Michael Shepley.

* "AN IDEAL HUSBAND" (*Westminster*). Donat's ideal Wilde revival. Irene Vanbrugh, Martita Hunt, Esme Percy, Roland Culver.

* "MEET ME VICTORIA" (*Victoria Palace*). Cockney humour with Lupino Lane.

* "THIS WAS A WOMAN" (*Comedy*). Sonia Dresdel, John Bryning, Nova Pilbeam in effective melodrama.

* SADLER'S WELLS BALLET SEASON (*New*). Robert Helpmann, Margot Fonteyn. Constant Lambert and Alec Sherman conduct.

* BALLETS JOOSS (*Haymarket*). Four and a half weeks' season during suspension of "Love for Love."

* "TEN LITTLE NIGGERS" (*St. James's*). Agatha Christie's thriller. Linden Travers, Allan Jeayes, Terence de Marney.

* "THE LOVE RACKET" (*Princes*). High-speed musical with Arthur Askey and Carol Raye.

* "CRISIS IN HEAVEN" (*Lyric*). Eric Linklater's political fantasy. Ernest Thesiger, Dorothy Dickson, Adèle Dixon, Esmond Knight.

* "HOW ARE THEY AT HOME?" (*Apollo*). J. B. Priestley's topical comedy. Henry Hewitt, Jennifer Gray, Charles Groves.

* "THE QUAKER GIRL" (*Coliseum*). Celia Lipton, Ivy St. Helier, Billy Milton, Hal Bryan.

* "A NIGHT IN VENICE" (*Cambridge*). Strauss opera. Dennis Noble, Jerry Verno.

N.B.—While we shall always do our best to keep this list up to date, we cannot hold ourselves responsible for any errors which may occur. Consult your daily paper; ring up the theatre to avoid disappointment.

relics of the last tenants. The bustle of their arrival marks the beginning of the film. Their quiet departure, in the spring of 1939, when what is left of the Gibbons family goes off to some little place in the country, ends it.

Between these two years a dozen tiny tragedies and comedies are played out in 17, Acacia Road. The three young Gibbonses grow up and go their separate ways. Vi, the elder daughter, marries a Communist agitator and turns him into a meek family man. Reg, the only son, and the apple of his mother's eye, gets killed in a motor accident. Queenie (Kay Walsh), the younger daughter, and her father's darling, is a handful all through, runs away with a married man, is deserted, and eventually marries the nice, honest young sailor from next door (John Mills). Grandma Gibbons happily grumbles her way to the grave, and Auntie Gibbons just as happily turns from hypochondria to spiritual healing. Mr. and Mrs. Gibbons (Robert Newton and Celia Johnson) go on and on, getting a little greyer and stiffer with the years, taking over the cares of grandparenthood, and occasionally indulging, for their health's sake, in a drop of Wincarnis, or even a spot of something stronger.

It is a very quiet history that we have here, but Noel Coward, with his shrewd eye for significant details of speech and behaviour, has made it all credible and sometimes extremely moving. In this

"Up in Arms" (Empire and Regal), a Sam Goldwyn Technicolor, tells of hypochondriac Danny Weems (DANNY KAYE), *a G.I. who sails on a transport for the South Pacific. Girl-friend Mary* (CONSTANCE DOWLING) *sails too by mistake; and both get into trouble after discovery by the Colonel. In prison on the Isle of Bagoona, Danny is captured by the Japs, but donning Jap uniform double-crosses them, and eventually becomes a medical orderly, which is just his métier.*

American-Ruritanian "Princess O'Rourke" (Warner and Regal) stars OLIVIA DE HAVILLAND *as exiled Princess Maria who, bored by her guardian's royal-suitor choice, takes 'plane for San Francisco. On arrival, pilot Eddie O'Rourke* (ROBERT CUMMINGS), *Dave* (JACK CARSON), *and stewardess* (JULIE BISHOP) *try to wake her. They can't. She has taken sleeping tablets.*

he is enormously helped by his actors, although one or two of them are occasionally affected by a rush of Cockney to the head. Robert Newton, in the part played by Coward himself on the stage, is warm and human, and Stanley Holloway, held down by a tacitly-written part as the Gibbons' next-door neighbour, proves himself one of the best of our British character actors. The performance of the film, though, comes from Celia Johnson as Ethel Gibbons, the overworked wife and mother. Mrs. Gibbons is no suburban beauty. She wears silk blouses of an off-shade, and drab skirts that hang rather badly. Her hair is unfashionably dressed and mousy. Her conversation is laconic. But Miss Johnson plays her so beautifully, with such sympathy and control, that she emerges from the film a tremendous woman. The scene in which she hears of the death of her son is a little classic. I shall be surprised if the year gives us any better screen performance. This in itself would be a justification, sensed by a playwright who believes in his chosen craftsmen, of a film that finds in a house in a row the symbol of a nation; daring to call itself "This Happy Breed" instead of, say, "17, Acacia Road."

"SEEDS OF FREEDOM" (Tatler) is the rather odd disguise under which a reconstituted American version of Eisenstein's classic "Potemkin" reappears after something like twenty years. "It represents" according to its sponsors, "a complex technical undertaking, involving the creation of a new story framework, step-printing, dubbing, and careful substitution of enacted scenes for the printed sub-titles in Eisenstein's original silent version. The new framework for the film involves an old Black Sea sailor, now a partisan in the present war, retelling to his young comrades the story of the famous revolt of the 'Potemkin,' in which he participated. In this way the past is linked with the present."

The moral of all this is that no one, not even an over-zealous commentator, can completely spoil a good thing. "Potemkin" remains inviolate, like the Coliseum introduced to a tourist by an ubiquitous guide. Not even American voices, American idiom, and American dialogue—sometimes pithy, sometimes ordinary, and all too frequently banal—can take away from its stature.

Eddie loves the Princess, but the prospect before him—of renouncing American citizenship for marriage and settling down to beget boys, does not attract him. Rebelling against her uncle's (CHARLES COBURN) *orders, he exits in a rage.*

But Eddie comes back, because he has nowhere else to go, and in stocking-feet so as not to wake Uncle, he and Maria slip out and helped by the President get married by a Supreme Court Justice.

"Potemkin" was made when men had a great theme and felt the urgency of its greatness. There is no other formula for a great work, whether in literature or film or any other form of art. And the spirit of those high days in Odessa in 1905 lives again to-day, even though we are repeatedly invited to believe that the revolt on the "Potemkin" was "just for a spoonful of stoo."

The attempted shooting of the mutinous sailors under cover of a tarpaulin remains one of the screen's most tense moments. The massacre on the Odessa steps will probably always be remembered as the classic cinema example of pure horror. The end, when the cruiser "Potemkin" sails out to give battle to the Tsar's Black Sea Fleet, only to find friends where she had expected annihilation, is one of those large resolutions of a theme known only to the major artists. And although this climax in the "improved" version is only a pale shadow of the original, it still retains its power to move and excite and thrill the spectator.

MARLENE SAWN IN TWO BY ORSON WELLES!

ORSON WELLES *and* MARLENE DIETRICH *are guest stars appearing "as themselves" in "Follow the Boys." They appear in Orson Welles's Mercury Wonder Show.*

Here's a feat of "black magic" from Orson Welles's wonder show: MARLENE DIETRICH *is conjured up and appears first as a silhouette in a frame. Then she steps out and becomes human.*

"No deception, ladies and gentlemen!" Magician ORSON WELLES *demonstrates the genuine qualities of his saw by giving it a blow, before he "saws* MARLENE *in two."*

When presenting his Mercury Wonder Show, WELLES *announces that he will hypnotise* MARLENE, *but she gives him the first glance and look what happens to the boastful fellow!*

"FOLLOW THE BOYS," due at the Leicester Square Theatre on June 16, is a Universal picture with George Raft and Vera Zorina; and a most impressive company of Guest Stars who appear "as themselves," in a show for the Forces. They include Orson Welles, who appears as the Magician of the "Mercury Wonder Show," with Marlene Dietrich as his chief assistant. The high-spot of their entertainment is undoubtedly the sawing-in-two of Marlene!

GERTRUDE LAWRENCE HOME AGAIN.

MISS GERTRUDE LAWRENCE *recently returned by air to London from the United States after an absence of six years. She is to start an ENSA tour of forces, factories and coal-fields almost immediately, and later hopes to entertain the troops overseas. She has brought back with her a comedy by the French author of "Tovarich" in which, no doubt, she will be seen at some future date. Our portrait shows her in the American stage version of "Lady in the Dark."*

THE LITERARY LOUNGER.

By L. P. HARTLEY.

A BOOK of short stories, an historical play written in collaboration with Mr. R. J. Minney, a selection of new poems and old, and now a volume of essays—there is no end to Sir Osbert Sitwell's versatility. And even within the covers of this single book his variousness manifests itself. The title, "Sing High! Sing Low!" suggests a wide compass of notes and it is more than justified.

"What It Feels Like to be an Author" is the kind of essay Lamb might have written: its theme is at once so personal and so general. Strange things are required of authors: who "would dream of writing to a fishmonger, saying 'Our idea is to collect your best fish, ask you to sign them and then auction them to fish-lovers and well-to-do people?'" . . . "Thomas Rowlandson," on the other hand, and "The Art of Pavel Tchelitchew" are acute and learned contributions to our understanding of those painters, while "The Red Folder," a fascinating inquiry, based on original sources, into the fate of the treasures purchased by a young Duke of Beaufort during his Grand Tour, shows that art-collectors had to be even warier in the eighteenth century than they have to-day.

The Near and the Far. Between these poles of treatment, the subjective and the objective, we have glimpses of China and Guatemala, combining careful observation and exact information with the fantasies that the most sober truth will always start in Sir Osbert's mind; dissertations on picnics and stage meals; a defence (sometimes disguised as a criticism) of the Old School Tie; an attempt, which would have delighted Sir Thomas Browne, to fix the local habitation of the "sole Arabian tree" in the Phœnix and the Turtle; and perhaps most fascinating and nostalgic of all, an evocation of the civilisation pictured on the lid of a cigar-box.

With Sir Osbert Art is almost an end in itself—almost, but not quite, for he never divorces æsthetics from the sensuous enjoyments of life. It is a family characteristic to make the mind and the senses work together, enriching each other. If he describes a picture, it is not simply a work of art hanging on a wall; he sees it as one might an apple in an orchard, deep in a context of other impressions, a fertilising interplay of all the senses in which the picture is the crowning excitement. Taste, smell and touch are generally considered the humblest of the senses. Their message is difficult to express in words, and a kind of puritanism forbids us to take them as seriously as the others. But though less serviceable to the mind than sight and hearing, they are even richer in the kindliness of animal nature. They convey æsthetic experiences which can be enjoyed without æsthetic training, and Sir Osbert never neglects them. The dishes he describes awaken hunger in the reader as well as connoisseurship.

The Smile and the Grin. If thought uprooted from the senses withers, without an infiltration of temperament it loses colour. Sir Osbert's thoughts shine through his moods as through a prism. The long sentences he handles with such mastery often end on quite a different note from that which ushered them in. He avoids the four-square stance of seriousness, masking it in a riot of baroque ornamentation, or relaxing, unexpectedly, into pure playfulness. The vultures in the island of Curaçao "can be seen on guard in the sweltering skies, superintending the deaths as though they were registrars in English towns." Or again, "Scarcely had we left the harbour before we ran into one of the finest and largest schools of porpoises—the Eton, it must have been, of the porpoise world." His grimness has the same imaginative quality. Speaking of the war, he says: "It will be a long time before we cease to notice the grin of the skull behind every smile that is offered to us." These enchanting pages, sunshiny with the things that make life worth living, might have been written to restore to the human countenance its lost play of expression and to substitute the smile for the grin.

Lost Illusions. "Illusion is the passport to paradise," says Romney Brent, the novelist and theorising psychologist in Mr. Claude Houghton's latest story; and the object of the book is to show what happens when a human being is robbed of the illusion which (in Brent's view) constitutes his only window on to reality.

Merle Markham had been for twelve years unhappily married to a successful business man when she met in Italy the paragon who embodied her dreams of happiness. "He 's God," was the simple announcement she made to her husband; but Oliver Markham, who had not seen Boris, regarded him as a devil, and a dago devil at that. With the art of the skilled story-teller, Mr. Houghton conceals Boris from us till the story is three-parts through; meanwhile, Merle awaits his summons to join him in a seventh heaven of bliss, and the suffering but unsympathetic Oliver spends the interval in a corresponding depth of hell. Their friends and relations, a queer assortment nearly all leading lives that seem to demand the attention of the priest, the psychiatrist or the police, do what they can to straighten out the Markhams' situation. Perhaps Dawes, the blackmailer, is the most clear-sighted, but Brent is the most active, and it is he whose experiment of confronting Merle's husband with her lover precipitates the catastrophe.

The Two Realities. Mr. Claude Houghton is a novelist of ideas and one to whom the spiritual world is more real than the actual. But he has an extremely good ear for dialogue, and his conversations are so plausible and realistic that we forget how improbable they sometimes are, and how improbable often, too, are the actions of which they are the outcome or the cause. But, as with a Turneresque sunset, the improbability seems a small defect in comparison with the glow and excitement of the colour. It only matters if—as occasionally happens in all Mr. Houghton's stories, but only once or twice in this one—the connection between the actual world and the world of the author's fantasy is strained to breaking-point. As usual, he is much concerned with the state of the world, which he regards as going from bad to worse (the period of his story is the interval between the two wars). "The only thing an author can write nowadays is an epitaph," says Brent, with the wit that many of the characters can achieve when pressed. "Only a shared illusion makes unity." Here all the characters are islanded, as it were, by their several illusions—Boris remarks that Oliver is an island surrounded by Oliver. But if illusions cannot be shared, they can be dramatised; and it is one of Mr. Houghton's chief distinctions as a novelist that he not only puts his characters in a dramatic relation to each other, but also their points of view. Dawes' callous determination to make money out of Oliver's agony of mind is an obvious instance.

Mr. Houghton writes recklessly and well; sometimes best when most recklessly, though not always. Excited and impatient, he never stops to polish, or to let the ferment in his mind mature into a wine of vintage character. But it is a heady and intoxicating brew.

A Near Thing. Mr. Bernard Newman is more flattering to the intelligence of his readers than most writers of spy stories care to be. He scorns to offer the kind of spy who, on being trodden on in a bus, says "*Ach, Gott in Himmel.*" Mr. Newman's spies are either indigenous or at least so carefully camouflaged that they fit inconspicuously into the landscape. Although some of his situations are familiar, "Second Front—First Spy" has a plausibility that is quite disturbing. In spite of Papa Pontivy and Captain Newman, in spite of all the efforts of Scotland Yard, the discovery of plans so carefully and intelligently laid is accomplished by the narrowest of margins. The author's respect for the German gift for organisation is considerable and gives us no encouragement to be unwisely complacent; he writes with assurance, and the clear and objective summary of the military and political situation given by one of the heads of the German Secret Service is unusually interesting, and should cause those who, in 1942, were clamouring for the immediate opening of a Second Front to reflect and perhaps to recant.

A Popular Death. "Between ourselves," says the Chief Constable to Superintendent Hanslet, "I can't feel wildly enthusiastic about avenging a blackmailer." Most people will agree with him; and that is why the "how?" in "Death Invades the Meeting" is always a more absorbing problem than the "who?"—a state of things which exactly suited Dr. Priestley, whose interest in crime was scientific rather than retributive, but which may disappoint those of Mr. John Rhode's readers who want to see a criminal unmasked and brought to justice.

The opening scenes, the meeting of the village Invasion Committee at the murderee's house, the production of the mysterious "mommet" and the strong hint of supernatural agency in Mr. Garswood's fall from the library ladder, are as exciting as one could wish; and the idea of composing the Committee mainly from among the dead man's victims, who have the best of reasons for not confiding in each other, is dramatic and ingenious. But the solution, as in more than one of Mr. Rhode's stories, is of a kind to satisfy the mechanically-minded rather than the sensation-addict or the psychological sleuth.

THE LONDON GALLERIES.

Summer Exhibition of the Royal Academy of Arts, *Burlington House, Piccadilly, W.1.*

Paintings by Official War Artists. Canadian War Paintings. *National Gallery, Trafalgar Square.*

Paintings by André Bauchant; drawings by Corrado Cagli. *Lefevre Gallery, new address, 131-4, New Bond Street, W.1.* Closes July 1.

Original Etchings by Edouard Manet; drawings by Segonzac. Paintings by Edward Wolfe. *Redfern Gallery, 20, Cork Street, W.1.* Closes June 24.

Epstein's "Girl with the Gardenias" and other recent sculpture; paintings by J. B. Manson and John Craxton. *Leicester Gallery, Leicester Square.*

Indian Art Exhibition, with lectures. *Alpine Club Gallery, 74, South Audley Street, W.1.*

BOOKS REVIEWED.

Sing High! Sing Low! By Osbert Sitwell. (*Macmillan; 10s. 6d.*)
Passport to Paradise By Claude Houghton. (*Collins; 8s. 6d.*)
Second Front—First Spy. By Bernard Newman. (*Gollancz; 8s. 6d.*)
Death Invades the Meeting. By John Rhode. (*Collins; 8s. 6d.*)

The photograph of Mr. J. C. Maude, with his father, Mr. Cyril Maude, and stepmother, published in our issue of May 17, was taken at his installation as Recorder of Plymouth; not of Devizes, as stated. Mr. Maude was Recorder of Devizes from 1939, and has now been appointed Recorder of Plymouth.

"PHANTOM·LADY"—FILM CHASE FOR A LOST WITNESS.

Ghastly suspicion! Carol Richman (ELLA RAINES) *has a hunch that Jack Marlow* (FRANCHOT TONE) *is the killer, and tries to call the police.*

The Phantom Lady with the striking hat: Scott Henderson (ALAN CURTIS) *picks up a strange girl in a bar, and asks her to go to the theatre with him. She accepts.*

Carol Richman, convinced that Scott Henderson did not kill his wife, tries to get proof of his alibi from Cliff (ELISHA COOK, JNR.), *the trap drummer.*

Brilliant young sculptor and psychopath Jack Marlow (FRANCHOT TONE) *is a madman. Here he is fondling his most prized work—a pair of over-life-size human hands.*

"PHANTOM LADY," new Universal picture, was due for production at the Tivoli last Sunday, June 11. It 's an exciting mystery. Scott Henderson, returning home late to his apartment, finds the police investigating the murder of his wife. He is accused, but has an alibi. He met a girl in a bar, and took her to the play—but the girl is a Phantom Lady, and those who saw him at the show testify that he was alone. Carol Richman, his former secretary, is sure of his innocence, and eventually succeeds in tracking down the killer and saving Scott from the electric chair.

OLD BLOCK.*

By JOHN ELAND.

IT was about the eighth round of the big fight, and Dan Gedge eased out of the creaking chair and strolled to the door. He grinned as the roar of the fans reached his ears—the only music that he loved—and pulled the lucky, faded robe more closely around his shoulders—the robe that had been his mantle when he wore the light-weight crown.

There had been four champions since then, he reflected. His mouth twisted wryly. This fight game was like a lift; up by intermediate stages and, sometimes, down to the bottom—non-stop. He 'd done well, very well. He could still make the light-weight poundage without the slightest difficulty.

The old technique was still keeping him out of serious trouble, although, if the fight went the distance, he was glad to rely on the clinches to save his heavy legs and deteriorating wind. The rumour still persisted that the one-time champ. would never see thirty-four years of age again. Dan looked down the side of his nose and said nothing. He had passed that milestone four years before. A loud roar from the fans! The big fight was over. Dan placed his hand on his grey-haired second's shoulder.

"Maybe we 'll take that job at Carlson's, Joe. I 'll hate to be on the wrong side of the ropes, but the money 's good an' regular. Perhaps there 's a champ. among 'em. This kid to-night, for instance . . . if he wins."

Dan had heard about the kid he was to fight. How he 'd promised to take up engineering if he lost. How he always kept his word. Yes; a fine school of boys in Carlson's quarters. Like Carlson himself, straight as a plumb-line. Pity if the kid lost! Bigger pity if he won—for Dan Gedge. Ten pounds! A kid could do a lot with ten pounds—but not as much as Dan, who lived in one room and still had his pride.

He passed through the lane of bodies to his corner, acknowledging the nods of acquaintances near the ringside with an upraised bandaged hand. The sports writers gave him occasional space when the flood of invention waned, and they were here in force to-night. Maybe they 'd heard of the kid; he was supposed to be the goods.

A buzz of conversation down the long hall. A disturbance in the opposite corner and the kid stepped lithely through the ropes. He was only a stripling, no more than eighteen, face pale, fine dark eyes fixed with strange intentness on the veteran. He turned and said something to his second, who patted him reassuringly on the shoulder.

There was no need for Joe Keane to say anything in Dan's corner. They blended like a machine. Dan leaned back, saying only an odd word, while the formalities were observed. The gloves were laced, and the veteran worked his supple fingers about inside them. He was ready, as always, for the job in hand, just like a workman.

At last; the bell. The kid came out of his corner like a catapulted stone. He whipped a left across that was full of poison, missing Dan's chin by the merest fraction of an inch. That lovely sway of the body saved Dan from an early and sensational knock-out. A sigh of relief whistled through the hall. Men looked at one another and shook grave heads. The kid's speed was uncanny, his style that of a fine and natural boxer. The promoter had been smart, matching youth and undoubted ability against an old fox.

Dan weaved and rocked, foiling the youngster's brainy attack, and just as the bell ended the first round, the kid's right scraped along the angle of the older man's lean jaw. Dan smiled into his corner at his wooden-faced second.

"I talked about training a champ at Carlson's, Old-timer. This looks a likely one."

Joe massaged his stomach and legs. No man of Dan's age, one-time champ. or not, could keep up for eight rounds against the hurricane in the opposite corner. Strangely enough, the old fighter was not thinking of the tense-faced youngster, but only of a similar night when youth had been on his side. He had never really forgotten the game old fighter who had fallen to his flailing gloves. "You 're on the top of the world now, but some day you 'll remember this night and me." Remember, eh? He had rarely had the old battler out of his mind for weeks; had never fully realised the true significance behind that terse sentence . . . until to-night. The top of the world! That was where the kid must be right now.

The lithe streak bounced out of the opposite corner as if he had a train to catch. That apparent haste didn't cause him to leave any loop-holes in his defence, though, and Dan smiled his admiration as the kid worked his way out of a neat trap. His long-range fighting was copy-book stuff: beautiful, long left hand, a right that came across with real venom behind it; only a master of craft could have survived that colourful round. The kid seemed to be using a dozen pairs of gloves, and all at the same time.

A silence had reigned for that session, but during the breather the crowd made up for it; general opinion favoured the kid. A few of the seasoned fans snapped the odds against the veteran. They 'd seen him upset so many good bets before. Babel, smoke!

Dan sat sucking fresh air—or as near to fresh as the heavily-charged atmosphere allowed. Long, practised gulps. He glanced across to the opposite corner and intercepted the youngster's bitter glance. The veteran rubbed his glove across his chin reflectively. Perhaps the kid was disappointed over the fight going two rounds, maybe he 'd pictured a quick knock-out—that first corking left, for instance. This modern age didn't tend to breed patience in 'em.

"The kid 's good," Joe said, with just a trace of anxiety behind his voice. "You all right?" Then hastily: "Of course y' are."

That third round was a classic. The big fight, the previous bout, had shown nothing to equal it; the kid's flying fists hammered at the old 'un's iron guard. Angry red splotches marked the kid's fair skin. Dan had made full use of his punching, connecting rarely, but accurately. Once, too, Dan went down on one knee; he could have risen when the referee intoned "Two," but he levered to his feet to beat the count. The kid, by a neat manœuvre, had the veteran in a corner, but he wormed his way out by sheer craft. The crowd, tuned up to the highest pitch, roared and stamped its appreciation. Only the bell saved the veteran.

The padded corner-post had never been so welcome, and Joe, working like a superman, shook a despondent grey head in front of Dan's closed eyes. Dan never heard the crowd, never opened his eyes during that blessed spell of brief relaxation. Roadwork; punchbag; all the necessary grind on that road to the top, yet he had enjoyed every minute of it; his thoughts ran over the salient points of his career while the seconds ticked away on the keen-faced timekeeper's watch. Power; wealth. He had known and lost both.

The fourth and fifth rounds were surprisingly tame, or seemed so after that dazzling third. Even those who had accepted the odds shuffled uneasily. Keen sportsmen all, they knew that Dan Gedge was fighting an apparently impossible battle. No man could have put up a greater display against youth and *anno Domini*.

Dan's heart pumped against his ribs; once more his eyes flicked across to the opposite corner. The kid leaned over the ropes, chatting to someone below the ring. He resumed his seat, and the veteran's eyes gleamed sombrely. Everything was blindingly clear. The youngster knew Dan Gedge for what he was . . . those strange glances, the ferocity of his attack—yes, that explained everything now.

The fight finished in the first few seconds of the next round—an unbelievable finish. How can you put new life into a sport-aged body? was the question that the astonished fans hurled at each other. Dan came out of his corner with dragging feet and the kid, lulled into the belief that the veteran had shot his bolt, went into the trap. For the fraction of a second he dropped his guard, and the veteran's right went through like a knife. Every dram of his desperate strength was behind the punch, and the kid went down to stay. Back in his dressing-room Dan smiled bleakly. Commotion still reigned outside.

"I 've fixed Carlson, Joe. The kid 'ud haunt me if I tried to fight again."

"He took it pretty bad," Joe agreed. "But I 've never known you to take a win like this before."

"Win, eh? The kid had a birthmark on his shoulder. Didn't see it until the fifth—first time for fifteen years. His mother hated the ring; left me because of it"—Joe turned away and battled with a lump in his throat as Dan went on—"I knew how she 'd be feelin' 'bout the kid, see?"

THE END.

**All the characters and incidents in this story are imaginary.*

Until then . . . "Chops are very nice to-day . . . or what about a mixed grill?" Until then, we aren't faring so badly. But many things are scarce and vital to the war effort. Rubber is one of them. Tyres must be kept at correct inflation pressure. Embedded flints must be removed from the treads as frequently as possible.

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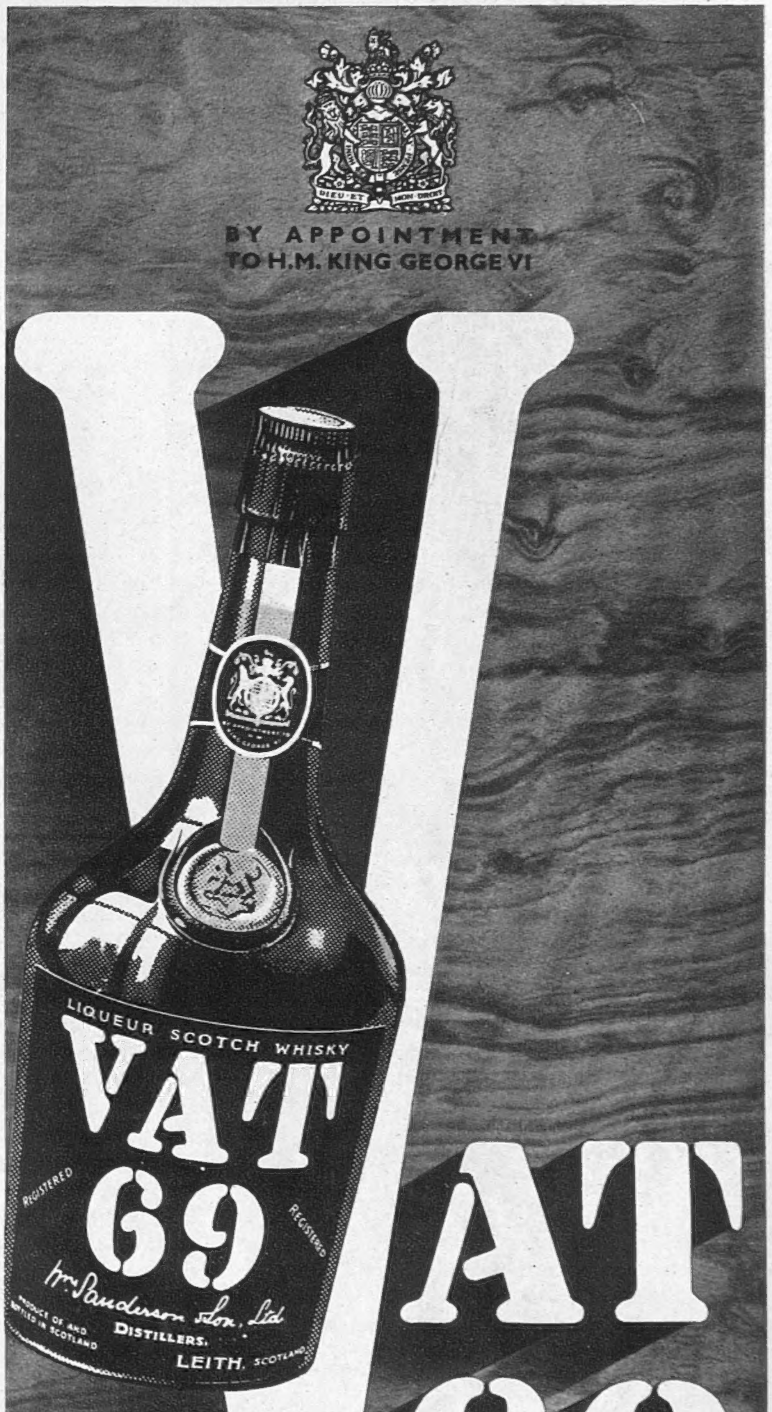

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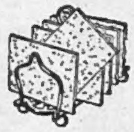

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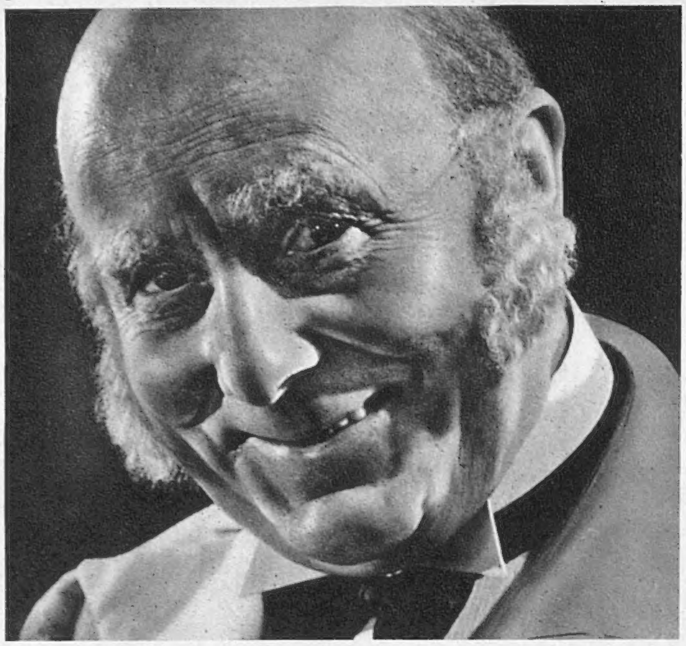

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